



ACTESA Newsletter

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#02

Australia eyes COMESA partnership to link farmers to export markets

The Australian Government through Australian Aid (AusAID) has expressed interest in partnering with the Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA), a Specialized Agency of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), to link small scale farmers to markets.

This was highlighted by the design team from AusAID who have been at the ACTESA Secretariat in Lusaka, Zambia from March 15-25, 2010 on an exploration mission meant to culminate into the design of a strategic partnership with the Agency.

During a press briefing held on March 24 2010, at the ACTESA offices, areas of potential collaboration were identified but not limited to facilitating the integration of small scale farmers and traders into markets; supporting ACTESA's role on policy advocacy, building the institutional capacity of ACTESA as well as learning from best experiences in the region and beyond.

Australian Aid (AusAID) Principle Adviser, Dr Alwyn Chilver, said ACTESA was in a good position to upscale small-scale farmers into commercial farmers.

He said AusAID was committed to supporting the ACTESA agenda and to promoting trade in the region as a valuable contribution to food security in the region.

Dr. Chilver commended ACTESA for being tangible and contributing to food security in Africa. He said AusAID was willing to provide farming systems expertise to assist smallholder farmers.

ACTESA Chief Executive Officer, Dr Cris Muyunda emphasized the importance of increasing the number of agro dealers in the market as a way of increasing competitiveness.

He said ACTESA was targeting to increase the number of agro-dealers by 700 in each of the countries targeted over the next couple of years.

Dr. Muyunda said increasing the number of agro-

dealers would significantly reduce the cost of farming inputs.

He thanked AusAID for their commitment and dedication to the ACTESA agenda.

EAFCA holds board meeting

COMESA Secretary General, Sindiso Ngwenya met with the Board of the East African Fine Coffee Association (EAFCA) on March 23, 2010 during the EAFCA Board meeting.

During the meeting, Board members interacted with the CEO of ACTESA, Dr. Cris Muyunda as well as the coordinator of the Programme for Building African Capacity for Trade (PACT) II in COMESA, Mr. Frank Mugenyi.

Some agreements reached during the meeting included:

- a. Considering modalities for incorporating EAFCA activities more closely with COMESA programmes;
- b. Considering strategies for implementing the coffee institute in the region;
- c. Implementing a 'women in coffee programme' in the region.

Additional discussions were held with the Australian mission designing a partnership programme with ACTESA.

Given the significance that coffee has as the lead agriculture export of the region and its status in contributing to rural incomes in much of the region, it was noted that a programme at ACTESA should consider broad support to strengthened market linkages in the sub-sector.

The objectives of the Coffee Association include:

- a. To be the coffee training centre of first choice and an acclaimed provider of relevant best coffee courses, training, research and development services;
- b. To acquire and sustain adequate physical and technical infrastructure to cope with increased demand for the centre's services;
- c. To be a strong, financially sustainable organization;
- d. To enhance and compliment the activities of